

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.















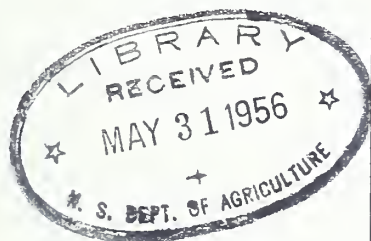






76 Fm

# THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF LIBYA

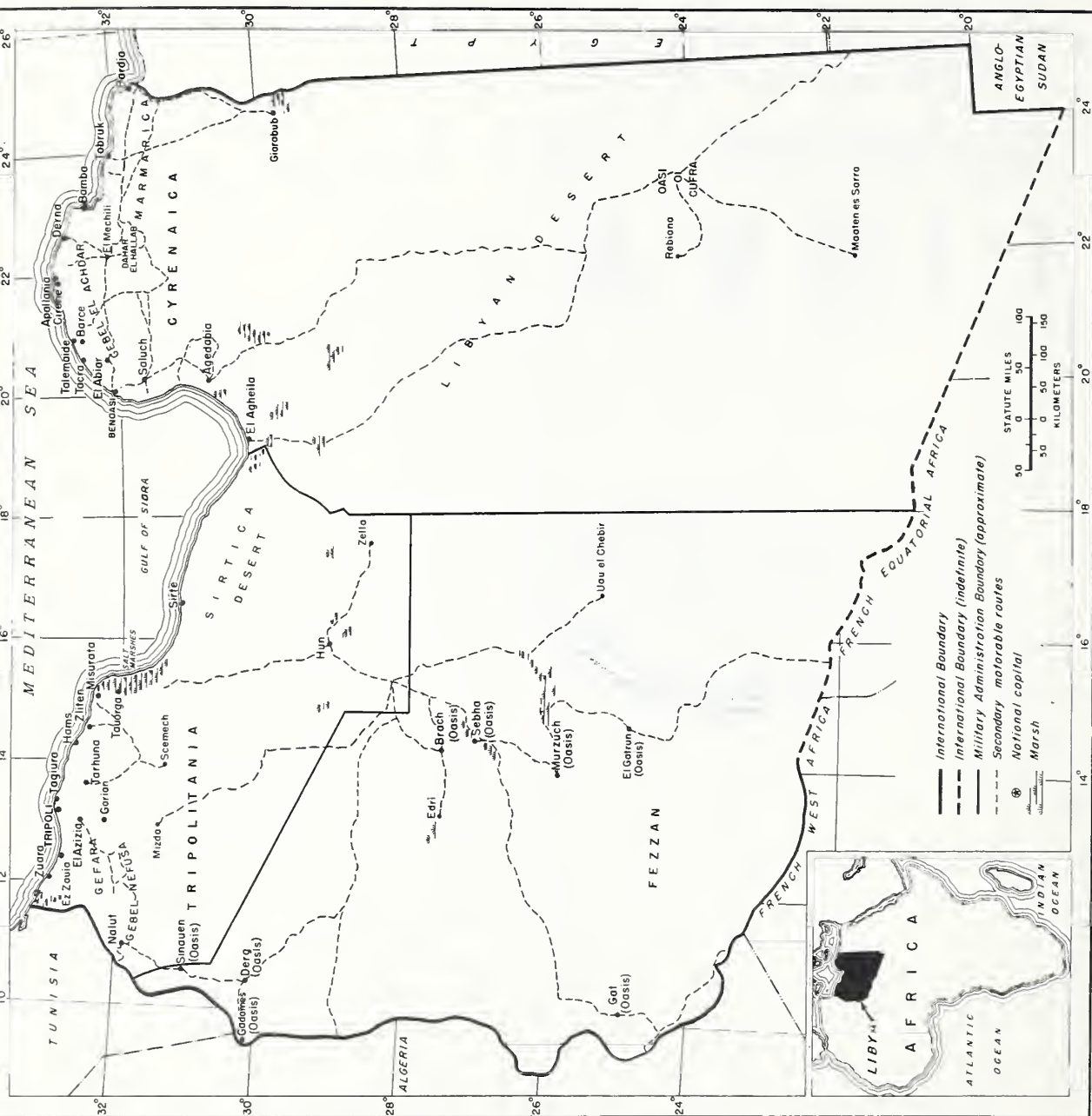


By Hilda M. Canady

3 10  
FAS - M - 1

205 Foreign Agricultural Service,  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

20 30 40 50 60



## LIBYA: Orientation Map

# THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF LIBYA

## Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Historical Background .....	1
Population Make-up .....	2
Libya Becomes Independent Nation .....	3
Physical Location .....	4
Land Area and Use .....	4
Climate .....	7
Soils .....	7
Population Engaged in Agriculture .....	8
Livestock Production .....	8
Sheep .....	9
Goats .....	10
Other Livestock .....	10
Cereal Crop Production .....	11
Other Crops .....	13
International Trade .....	15
Technical Assistance .....	17
Bibliography .....	19

March 1956

## FOREWORD

Libya gained its independence on Christmas Eve 1951 by resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This report deals with some of the agricultural problems of the young nation and some of the accomplishments that have come about during the **four**-year struggle to attain a viable economy. It was written with the general reader in mind and is not intended primarily for the specialist. Information was gleaned from many sources, but principally from the reports of the various agencies of the United Nations and despatches from the American Embassy in Tripoli and the United States Operations Mission to Libya.



## THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF LIBYA

### Historical Background

Libya was the Greek name for northern Africa in olden times. More than 3,000 years of recorded history gives the land an ancient heritage. Almost a half century ago, it came under the influence of western Europe and during all that time it has had outside help. Under Italian rule Libya was subsidized; under subsequent British Administration, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were subsidized; France also subsidized the Fezzan. Since gaining its independence in late 1951, Libya has received assistance from the United Nations and other sources. It seems the future of Libya for a long time to come will depend on foreign economic and technical assistance.

Libya came under control of the Phoenicians in about 1100 B.C. These people were traders and were interested only in guarding their commerce. They founded trading stations along the shores in order to conduct their trade with the interior of the country. They took little interest in the agricultural development there.

The early history of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica is similar. In the seventh century B.C. Cyrenaica came under the Greeks and was prosperous for about 500 years. Then it passed to the Ptolemies and from them to the Romans about 100 B.C. The Carthaginians ruled Tripolitania from about 500 B.C. until the first century B.C., when it also passed to the Romans. Fezzan was part of the territory of the Garamantes, a people believed to have belonged to an ancient Negro civilization in the northern Sahara. In the first century B.C. Fezzan was conquered by the Romans too. The three regions remained under Roman rule until about 500 A.D.

The small areas fringing the coast, which were developed by the Greeks and the Romans, were abandoned after the fall of the Roman Empire. Only relics of these civilizations remain. In Tripolitania, ruins of three cities of ancient times, Oea, Sabratha, and Leptis Magna, still exist. In Cyrenaica the main relics are found at Cirene and Apollonia. Cirene was founded in 665 B.C. by Greeks from the Island of Thera (now Santorin). The Delphi oracle indicated the existence of a perennial spring at Cirene. There had been 2 years of drought on Thera which led the islanders to a search for water. Apollonia, about 10 miles distant, was the port for Cirene. In the fifth century A.D. Cirene was one of the largest cities in Africa. It is situated on a plateau which overlooks the sea and coastal areas. A magnificent view rewards one fortunate enough to visit these old remnants of a civilization long past. The Cirene spring is still flowing after all these centuries.

After the fall of Rome, the Arabs took Libya. From that time the civilization that had endured for a thousand years declined. From about 1100 A.D. to 1600 A.D. there was a period of lawlessness. Then the Turks occupied the country and remained in control until about the time of the Italian occupation in 1911. Tripolitania yielded early to the Italians and progressed significantly. Cyrenaica never completely yielded and so

remained backward but proud.

### Population Make-up

The population of the three provinces reflects the successive waves of conquest that have swept the country. The original inhabitants of northern Libya were the Berbers, who reputedly were little affected by the invasions of the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and Vandals. The Arabs, who arrived in two waves in the seventh and eleventh centuries, absorbed their predecessors, the Arabian influence reaching its peak along the seaboard and lessening toward the south and west. To this day Berber communities are found in the Libyan Desert in western Tripolitania. The Arabs of Cyrenaica claim descent from Beni Hillal and Beni Suleim, invaders of the eleventh century. They are probably as pure Arab stock as any outside Arabia. A second group was formed partly from the original Berber and Greco-Berber stock and partly from scattered stock from the interior.

A mixture of races is found in the Fezzan; Berbers are more numerous in the north and west; Arab tribes tend their flocks between Tripolitania and Fezzan; Tuaregs roam widely over the ranges of the west and south; and Tebbu nomads are found near Murzuk and elsewhere.

No census has been taken but the total population is estimated at between 1,050,000 and 1,250,000. Table 1 shows the Libyan people by Province.

Table 1.--Libyan people, by Province, 1950

Province	Moslem	Italian	Jewish	Others	Total
Cyrenaica	300,000	262	-	251	300,513
Tripolitania	711,960	46,838	8,000	3,800	770,598
Fezzan	41,280	-	-	-	41,280
Total	1,053,240	47,100	8,000	4,051	1,112,391

Source: FAO Report No. 21 "Report to the Government of Libya on Agriculture," Rome, November 1952.

According to table 1, about 95 percent of the inhabitants are Moslems, believers in the religion founded by Mohammed. In compiling the figures, it is evident that the term "Moslem" was used to apply to the Arabic population which is tribal in nature and composed of many different tribes.

Table 2 shows the population of the country by mode of life. Of the Moslem population, nearly one-half (44 percent) are nomadic or seminomadic in its way of life.

Table 2,--Population of Libya, by mode of life, 1950

Race	Urban	Settled rural	Semi- nomadic	Nomadic	Total
Moslem	193,000	397,860	246,530	215,850	1,053,240
Italian	29,494	17,606	- -	- -	47,100
Jewish	8,000	- -	- -	- -	8,000
Others	4,051	- -	- -	- -	4,051
Total	234,545	415,466	246,530	215,850	1,112,391

Source: "A General Economic Appraisal of Libya," prepared by John Lindberg, expert appointed by the Technical Assistance Administration of the United Nations, 1952. ST/TAA/K/Libya/1.

The figures shown in tables 1 and 2 are taken from publications of the United Nations that appeared in 1952. It is believed that they are based on a survey conducted about 1950.

### Libya Becomes Independent Nation

On December 24, 1951, Libya, by resolution of the United Nations, became an independent nation for the first time in its long history. It is thought by some observers that this action was taken because neither the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers nor the United Nations could agree on any other formula for control of the war-ravaged wreck of the Italian empire. The question was taken up at the Paris Peace Conference in February 1947 when Italy renounced all claim to its three African territories -- Libya, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland. Article 23 of the Peace Treaty provided that final disposition of these former Italian colonies should be settled by France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union within 1 year after enactment of the Treaty. The four powers failed to agree on disposition of the colonies and the question was then referred to the third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations for a decision.

After many months of discussion, in November 1949, the General Assembly of the United Nations by resolution decided that Libya, comprising the three regions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan, would become an independent and sovereign state as soon as possible and not later than January 1, 1952.

The United Nations appointed a Commissioner, Adrian Pelt of the Netherlands, to assist the people of Libya in drawing up a constitution and establishing an independent government. The Commissioner was advised by a Council composed of one representative from each of the three Provinces of Libya, a representative of the Libyan minorities, and one representative from Egypt, France, Italy, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. After investigation, the Commissioner reported to the United Nations that the establishment of a sound and viable Libya would be a prolonged process; that the new nation would require much more than just the granting of political



and technical assistance; and that it would need constructive assistance in solving its many economic and social problems. The United Nations, therefore, in November 1950 passed another resolution urging its specialized agencies to extend to Libya such assistance as was requested while the country was making an effort to establish a viable economy.

The constitution of Libya was promulgated in October 1951. It provided for a federal and representative system of government with an hereditary monarch. Present head of state is King Idris I. He is a Cyrenaican and a descendant from one of the foremost families of Libya. Parliament consists of two chambers -- a Senate and House of Representatives. Each Province has a governor, known as the Wali. These are appointed by the King and are his representatives within the Provinces.

The task of making Libya economically sound is tremendous. Its budget has been badly out of balance which has made it difficult to channel any of its national income into economic and social development projects. 1/ Lack of water has limited agricultural production, with a resultant low standard of living. Until the United States International Cooperation Administration (formerly Foreign Operations Administration) started agricultural training schools, there were almost no native-born professional or technical workers. There exists a distinct lack of national unity.

#### Physical Location

Libya is located in North Africa and is bounded on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the east by Egypt, and on the west by Algeria and Tunisia, as shown on figure 1. Its southern portion is the Great Sahara Desert for the most part and borders on French Equatorial and French West Africa. Libya has approximately 1,000 miles of Mediterranean coastline and no rivers. Natural resources other than agricultural are practically nonexistent and there is very little industry (see map on inside front cover).

During World War II, many battles were fought over Libya's deserts for control of Egypt and the North African coast. There are two seaports in Libya of strategic importance -- Tripoli and Tobruk. A number of airfields have been established in northern Libya. Many more could be located there, if needed, in the event of future conflicts involving control of that part of the world.

#### Land Area and Use

Libya's main source of income is agriculture and it has been so for many centuries. Until such time as its agricultural production can be increased to the extent that its agricultural exports can take care of its imports, Libya will be dependent on foreign assistance.

Libya's total area is approximately 435 million acres -- or about one-fourth the size of the United States. The country is divided into three

---

1/ The national income was about \$62 per person in 1952, one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world.



Provinces. Tripolitania, in the west, has approximately 20 million acres of productive land, over 16 million of which are suited to grazing. Of the remaining 4 million, about 800,000 are suitable for settled farming. Cyrenaica, in the east, has about 10 million acres of productive land, 350,000 of which are suited to dry farming. The remaining acres can be used only for grazing and shifting cereal cultivation. Fezzan, to the south, has about 6,700 acres planted to irrigated gardens and approximately 297,000 acres in unirrigated date palms.

Land use falls into three categories: grazing land, land under shifting cultivation, and land under settled farming. Table 3 gives the latest FAO figures on land utilization in Libya as a whole and by Provinces.

Table 3.—Land utilization in Libya, 1951-52

(In thousands of acres)

Province	Period	Total area	Agricultural area				Built-on			
			Arable land	Permanent meadows and pastures	Forest	Unused but potentially productive	area, wasteland			
			and under tree crops		land					
Cyrenaica	1951	434,772	6,175	16,165	1/ 1,134	—	411,298			
	1952	199,286	2/ 101	—	—	—	199,185			
Fozzan	1952	148,260	2/ 490	—	—	128	147,642			
Tripolitania	1951	87,226	5,584	16,165	—	1,794	63,683			

1/ Data taken from world forest inventory carried out by FAO in 1953.

2/ Total agricultural area.

Source: 1954 Yearbook of Food and Agricultural Statistics, Vol. VIII, part 1. Rome 1955.

Libya is mainly desert; vegetation is found in this desert only in scattered oases where water is near the surface. In northern Libya the climate is modified by the Mediterranean Sea, and here approximately 95 percent of the Libyans live.

### Climate

Rainfall throughout Libya is erratic, both in amount and distribution. Every year there are droughts in some parts of the country, and every few years large areas suffer. In fact, droughts occur so often, were it not for the irrigated areas, crop production would be almost negligible. The range plants are dormant during droughts, and grow only when it rains. The range plants greatly help keep the livestock industry going.

Winds have an important effect on the crop production of Libya. There are the hot and extremely dry winds, known locally as ghibli, that come in from the desert. They blow constantly for days, raise the temperature above 110° F., scorch and burn the crops, and by driving the sand do much damage. While the ghiblis burn the barley and other crops, these winds according to some sources, are necessary to bring the dates to maturity. There are, too, the moisture-laden winds along the coastal area that help maintain the level of vegetation found there. These winds temper the climate and make Tripoli and other coastal sites desirable places to live in. The winds from the Mediterranean also carry salt which limits trees and crops that can be grown. These winds break the limbs of trees and turn the crops brown.

Winds cause the light soils to disintegrate. The policy has been to set securely dried plant material in the moving dunes. The native term for this practice is "dissing." This "diss" does not grow; it merely acts as a windbreak and affords the other vegetation, i.e., native trees, herbaceous plants, and shrubs, an opportunity to grow. During 1954, approximately 7,400 acres of land were reclaimed and vegetated through sand-dune fixation. Also, in that year, 200,000 seedlings were distributed to farmers for shelterbelt plantings to protect crops from wind and soil erosion.

The temperatures in Libya are high, as can be expected in a desert country. A few years ago, the world's highest recorded shade temperature, 136.4° F., was registered in the Gafara Plain in Tripolitania. Temperatures are naturally lower along the coast and in the mountainous areas. Humidity is not high and is also affected by location.

### Soils

Along the coast of Tripolitania, soils are predominantly light and sandy and are 30 to 40 feet deep. South in the Gafara and Gobel Nefusa regions, the soils are heavier and mixed with clay. In Cyrenaica, the soils are predominantly rocky and most of them are hard to till with the available power. The cultivated soils in the Fezzan are predominantly very light and are sandy or clayey-sandy.

The soils of Libya are so light, except in a very few areas, that they

are subject to erosion by the lightest of winds. They are low in humus and very porous. Large amounts of water are required because of these factors and also because evaporation is rapid, owing to low humidity. It is necessary to irrigate frequently. The water sinks rapidly, much of it evaporating so it is better to apply less water oftener.

### Population Engaged in Agriculture

Libya in 1952 had an estimated population of 1,250,000; 5 percent European; density 1.7 per square mile. Population is growing at the rate of 1.1 per cent per annum. Of the total population, some 80 percent are engaged in agricultural production. If these people are determined enough, and have the ability to take advantage of the assistance now being provided by foreign aid, Libya's standard of living may be raised considerably.

### Livestock Production

Since Libya's greatest asset is its natural grazing land, which totals approximately 20 million acres of flat, arid land suitable for grazing, livestock production is of major importance. Improvement of this grazing land would boost Libya's economy more than any other single enterprise. Range improvement is difficult to realize in Libya, however, due to the Arab's nomadic way of life.

Livestock production falls into two divisions: that carried on by the Arabs on the open ranges, and that pursued on land enclosed on the outskirts of villages and oases. The old saying, "Things used in common are no one's responsibility to repair or conserve," holds true with respect to Libya's open ranges. Too many goats are roaming the ranges and destroying the vegetation. Several recommendations for range improvement were made to the Libyan Government by technical assistance officials, namely:

"1. Establish a policy of sound land tenure. (Recent information from Libya indicates that its problems of land tenure and ownership, and the traditional control and use of lands by tribes, remain unsolved.)

"2. Establish seasonal grazing districts and form a board of advisers in each district.

"3. By passing adequate range laws insure deferred grazing.

"4. Follow practices of proper range reseeding using species which have proven their value under Libyan conditions.

"5. Restrict numbers of livestock allowed to graze upon certain areas, or in other words, set proper carrying capacities.

"6. Tax laws should be passed which will encourage Arabs to own better types of animals.

"7. Country-wide culling program to reduce number of inferior animals



which are currently trampling and eating valuable forage, but which are unproductive.

"8. Better blooded animals should be introduced."

The estimated livestock population of Libya by Provinces for 1951 is given in table 4.

Table 4.--Estimated livestock population of Libya, by Province, 1951

Livestock	Cyrenaica	Tripolitania	Fezzan	Total
Sheep	1,000,000	382,000	1/ 8,000	1,390,000
Goats	300,000	442,000	1/ 12,000	754,000
Cattle	150,000	30,000	--	180,000
Camels	250,000	64,000	10,000	324,000
Horses	12,000	5,000	--	17,000
Donkeys	(2/)	30,000	(2/)	(2/)
Mules	(2/)	1,200	(2/)	(2/)
Pigs	--	2,000	--	2,000

1/ It is estimated that there are 20,000 sheep and goats in the Fezzan; the allocation shown here is purely arbitrary.

2/ Unknown

Source: United States Foreign Service Despatch No. 238, April 13, 1953.

### Sheep

Sheep raising is the most important livestock enterprise. The native Barbary sheep are fat-tailed and are better able to withstand the hot, dry climate than other types. When the range is green, they can thrive without ready access to drinking water. In the dry season, the sheep can get along if watered every 2 or 3 days. The principal drawbacks of the native sheep are the high percentage of kemp fibers and coarse hair in the fleeces; many of the fleeces are multi-colored, and many of the sheep are bare-bellied. The wool is of the carpet type and there is a demand for this type wool on the world market. Increasing wool production in Libya would not affect United States foreign trade in this product, since United States wool is not the carpet type.

In 1954 a sheep improvement program was undertaken in Tripolitania, with the importation of Barbary rams from Tunisia. These sheep have superior body conformation and improved fleeces. Average weight of a fleece from a Libyan sheep is 3.96 pounds, while the average weight of a fleece from a Tunisian sheep is 7.48 pounds. This program, as it continues in operation, may appreciably increase the income from the sheep industry and may mean substantial added income for Libya's economy.

Although wool is one of Libya's major sources of income, poor marketing

practices have resulted in prices at or below the cost of production. Recent information indicates that improved methods in curing hides and skins have been introduced. Advancements have also been made in wool sorting and cleaning.

Besides wool, sheep furnish meat, milk, butter, and cheese.

### Goats

Goats are nearly as important as sheep and are also hardy animals. They furnish meat, milk, and cheese. Their hair and skins are used for making tents and sometimes for water bags.

Cheese and butter are now imported from the Netherlands and Australia. If a better breed of goats could be raised in Libya, more milk could be produced and thus imports of these two items could be reduced. The problem is to find a breed as tough as the native goat. There are too many goats for the available range. Under proper management practices, instead of being a major livestock problem, the goats could become an asset.

### Other Livestock

The camel, or dromedary, since it has one hump, is important as a pack and draft animal. It furnishes the Arab his main power in shifting cereal cultivation. It has been said that the camel is the most cherished possession of the Arab. Camel's milk and meat are significant items in the Libyan diet and the hump yields fat. Camel hair is mixed with goat hair to produce cloth for tents. The hides are used as leather.

The cattle in Libya are small and light in weight. They are used by the Arabs for drawing water and plowing, to provide milk for the owners' use, and milk and meat for sale in urban centers.

Donkeys are used primarily for transportation, either for pulling cart loads or carrying the burdens on their backs.

The few mules in Libya are owned by the Italians. It is expected that since the Tunisian Arabs are becoming interested in the mule, the Libyan Arabs may also discover its merit. Mules bring a better price than horses.

The horses owned by the Italians are work animals, while those owned by the Arabs are considered a symbol of wealth and position.

Swine are raised by the Italians since the Moslems, due to their religious beliefs, are not permitted to eat pork. Even so, hog production could be increased profitably, since there is a potential market for pigs and pork products in Malta and Italy, and for the armed forces in Libya.

Although it would seem that expansion of livestock production offers the greatest hope for Libya, unless the range can be better managed and rebuilt, and means developed for supplemental feeding, additional livestock production from the ranges cannot be anticipated.

### Cereal Crop Production

Cereal production, after livestock, is the largest source of income and means of subsistence for the entire country. Barley is the principal cereal grown and constitutes the main food supply of the population, similar to rice in Japan and wheat in Europe. Barley grows quickly and matures before hot weather and lack of moisture kills it. Since it is more tolerant of the alkaline soils, barley also does better than wheat under irrigation in the Fezzan.

Wheat is grown as a dryland crop in the low mountainous areas of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and under semi-irrigation by Italians.

Table 5 shows available barley and wheat production estimates for the Provinces.

Table 5.—Barley and wheat production in Libya, average 1935-39, and annual 1945-53  
(In thousands of metric tons)

Period or year	Barley			Wheat		
	Tripolitania :	Cyrenaica :	Fezzan :	Total :	Tripolitania :	Cyrenaica : Fezzan: Total
Average: 1935-39	26	1/ 15	-	41	1/ 18	- 25
Annual:						
1945	70	2/ 35	0.4	105.4	5.0	0.8 14
1946	75	2/ 20	0.3	95.3	4.5	0.9 11
1947	1.8	2/ 20	0.3	22.1	4.8	0.8 6
1948	22	40	0.3	62.3	7.5	1.0 10.9
1949	3/141	36	0.4	177.4	6.5	1.2 16.7
1950	85	31	0.3	116.0	6.5	1.1 15.6
1951	54					
1952	65		4/ 1.4			1.5
1953	36	20			6	

1/ Average 1937-38.

2/ Official returns for barley production in 1945-47 were : 7,900, 8,400, and 6,000 tons. Because considerable exports of barley were made in all but 1947, the unofficial estimates appear more realistic although they are far from reliable.

3/ Tripolitanian statistics are based on assessments for taxes, and the surprisingly high crop figure for 1949 is attributed also to more complete assessments.

4/ Barley and other grains.

Source: A general economic appraisal of Libya prepared by John Lindberg, expert appointed by the Technical Assistance Administration of the United Nations, 1952, and United States Foreign Service despatches.



Very few other cereals are produced. Some millet and sorghum are grown in the Arab gardens during the summer.

During favorable years Libya has a surplus of barley and wheat to export, but in years of drought production falls below domestic requirements. Severe droughts in Tripolitania during 1953 and 1954 cut the crop below requirements, and it was necessary for the United States to donate wheat. In 1954, the United States gave 30,000 tons of wheat and Turkey gave 2,000 tons to meet Libya's need.

In the past year, three grain-storage silos, with a total capacity of 10,000 metric tons, were restored in Cyrenaica. These when filled should relieve the grain shortage in drought years.

It is possible to increase cereal production through extension of cultivated areas. Increased yields per acre could be obtained through better tillage methods, control of weeds, use of more efficient tools, and the introduction of improved varieties of wheat and barley.

### Other Crops

The crop second in importance to cereals is olives. There are very few olive trees found in the Fezzan. However, olives are grown in the coastal and low mountain areas of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. There are suitable locations for additional plantings, but the chief obstacle seems to be age at which trees begin to bear. An olive tree will live for several hundred years but it does not begin to bear for 10 or 12 years after planting. Almond trees begin to bear in 5 or 6 years and could be inter-planted with the olive trees to provide an earlier income from an orchard. Some means should be found to recompense any individual who plants and cares for an orchard in its early years. It seems out of the question to expect an Arab to plant an olive orchard and wait for years before getting any benefit from it.

Dates follow olives in importance. Date palms are found, both wild and cultivated, throughout Libya. The greater portion of the crop is consumed locally, and is important in the Arabian diet.

Libya also grows some almonds, grapes, figs, peaches, plums, apricots, pomegranates, and some citrus fruits. There is an early-season market in Europe for Libyan citrus fruit. Strains of oranges which yield fruit early in the season are getting attention in Tripolitania as a means of capturing that market before European oranges mature. This policy could well be followed with other citrus crops. Improved methods in the grading and packing of citrus fruits have shown results in better prices on the foreign market. The Mediterranean fruit fly is a serious deterrent to citrus fruit production, and means for controlling this serious pest will have to be found.

Varieties of both summer and winter vegetables are grown in Libya and in some years are produced in sufficient quantities to supply the local markets. The greatest production of vegetables is in Tripolitania. Surpluses are sold to Cyrenaica and exported to Malta.

In Cyrenaica, an assistance program has achieved an increase in production. The Provincial government for several years has distributed seed potatoes on condition that the same amount will be returned by the farmers to the government at harvesttime. By 1954, farmers in the Gebel (Mts.) area were growing so many potatoes that Cyrenaica's dependence on imports was reduced substantially.

Production of peanuts has increased appreciably where there is irrigation water. In 1939, about 500 acres were planted to peanuts in Tripolitania, resulting in production of 150 tons. In 1952 an estimated 4,620 tons of peanuts were produced on approximately 9,100 acres. About 1,840 tons were exported, principally to France and Tunisia. In 1954 peanuts accounted for about 16 percent of Libya's exports and were valued at more than \$1 $\frac{1}{2}$  million.

Esparto, castor seeds, and tobacco are among the industrial crops of some importance to Libya. Esparto is a grass that grows wild over most of the Libyan semidesert regions, with the main producing area on the Gebel Nefusa in Tripolitania. Livestock are not fond of it; consequently it continues to grow in spite of general overgrazing. Esparto grass is in demand in the United Kingdom and is used for the manufacture of fine quality paper and banknotes. In 1954 esparto accounted for more than 16 percent of Libya's exports at a value of more than \$1 $\frac{1}{2}$  million.

Table 6 gives available figures on the production of crops other than barley and wheat in the Provinces for years 1943 to 1950.

Table 6.--Estimated production of crops other than barley and wheat in Libya, 1943-50

-----1,000 metric tons-----

Province and crop	: 1943	: 1944	: 1945	: 1946	: 1947	: 1948	: 1949	: 1950
<hr/>								
Tripolitania:								
Dates	12.0	22.0	20.0	15.0	35.0	32.0	30.0	40.0
Tomatoes	2.0	5.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	9.0	10.0	10.0
Grapes	2.5	5.7	6.5	6.0	7.0	4.5	5.0	5.0
Olive oil	1.1	2.7	1.8	.6	.9	1.5	8.0	8.0
Citrus fruits	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.0	4.5	2.0	5.5	5.5
Almonds		.5						
Cyrenaica:								
Dates	10.0	2.5						
Fezzan:								
Dates	6.0	5.0	7.0	5.0				

Source: FAO Report No. 21 "Report to the Government of Libya on Agriculture." This report lists as source "Four Power Commission Report, supplemented by local officials."

### International Trade

Table 7 gives Libya's foreign trade picture for the years 1951 through 1954. The figures are probably not too reliable but they give an index to the situation. A Central Statistics Office was established in 1954 and fuller foreign trade data, which will be more reliable, should be forthcoming in the future.

Table 7.--Libya's foreign trade, 1951-54  
(Value in thousands of United States dollars)

Year	: Imports	: Exports	: Trade deficit
1951	28,350	13,264	15,086
1952	34,723	12,743	21,980
1953	36,963	9,352	27,611
1954	31,351	10,746	20,605

Source: United States Foreign Service Despatch No.386, June 30,1955.

The import figure for 1953 includes foreign military and diplomatic imports which amounted to about 15 percent of the total. These imports were omitted for the most part from the 1954 estimates. When these estimates are considered, imports for the 2 years were about the same.

Table 8 shows Libya's principal exports and imports during 1954. Imports of principal agricultural products were valued at approximately \$6,241,000 and represented 19.8 percent of the total principal imports. Exports of Libya's principal agricultural products were valued at \$7,285,000 and represented 70.9 percent of the total principal exports.

Table 8.--Libya's principal exports and imports, 1954

Imports	Value	Percent of total	Exports	Value	Percent of total
	US \$1,000			US \$1,000	
Tea	2,934	9.4	Esparto	1,708	15.9
Machinery and appliances	2,318	7.4	Peanuts	1,632	15.2
Meal and wheat flour	1,823	5.8	Sheep and goats	1,120	10.4
Petroleum products	1,669	5.3	Sponges	1,044	9.7
Road motor vehicles	1,596	5.1	Wool and animal hair	846	7.9
Wheat	1,484	4.7	Olive and sansa oil	731	6.8
Cotton fabrics	1,288	4.1	Scrap metal	630	5.9
Other	18,239	58.2	Hides and skins	624	5.8
			Fruits and nuts	624	5.8
			Other	1,787	16.6
Total	31,351	100.0	Total	10,746	100.0

Source: United States Foreign Service Despatch No. 386, June 30, 1955.

Table 9 shows Libya's foreign trade by countries during 1954. Italy and the United Kingdom were the principal countries concerned, supplying 55 percent of the imports and taking 61 percent of Libya's exports.



Table 9.--Libya's foreign trade, by country, 1954

Imports			Exports		
Origin	Value	Percent of total	Destination	Value	Percent of total
	US \$1,000			US \$1,000	
Italy	10,447	33	United Kingdom	3,164	31
United Kingdom	6,938	22	Italy	3,060	30
Ceylon	2,061	7	Greece	1,781	17
Netherlands	1,736	5	Malta	703	7
Germany	1,618	5	Egypt	554	5
Egypt	1,313	4	Germany	386	4
Belgium	868	3	Netherlands	258	3
France	851	3	French North Africa	148	1
Canada	776	2	Others	216	2
United States	717	2			
Others	4,407	14	Total domestic exports	10,270	100
Subtotal	31,732	100	Plus reexports	476	
Less foreign and diplomatic imports	381				
Total	31,351		Total	10,746	

Source: United States Foreign Service Despatch No. 386, June 30, 1955

During most of 1954, Libya continued to restrict imports from the dollar countries. In November of that year, however, the Libyan Government announced that a more liberal policy could be followed in 1955 due to availability of more dollars resulting from conclusion of the Libyan-American Economic Aid Agreement. Therefore, all things being equal, a significant increase in imports from the United States may be expected in calendar year 1955.

#### Technical Assistance

The Libyan Government is being given technical assistance through the U. S. International Cooperation Administration and the United Nations. Technicians in many fields are provided to aid in the training of Libyans so that they can be qualified to operate their governmental affairs.



